

BOARD OF EDUCATION, NEW FAIRFIELD, CT
Special Education Ad Hoc Subcommittee Meeting

Name of Subcommittee: Special Education Ad Hoc Meeting type: Regular
Date of Meeting: 10/1/24 Minutes submitted by: Susan Huwer
Members present: Sue Huwer, Kimberly LaTourette, Ed Sbordone
Members absent: Samantha Mannion
Other attendees: Ken Crow, Maria Kennedy
Place of meeting: New Fairfield Community Room, 33 Route 37, New Fairfield, CT.

The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. June 6, 2024

Motion: To approve the minutes of June 6, 2024, as presented

Made by: Ed Sbordone

Seconded by: Kimberly LaTourette

Recording of vote: All in favor

III. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Unified Sports - Maria Kennedy reported that the Unified Sports Program will have a fall season of volleyball from October 7 through November 11. Elisa Bodnar will coach. Four other districts will participate. The winter sport will be basketball and spring sport will be track and field.

B. STRIDES - Maria Kennedy reported that the new STRIDES location is awaiting its Certificate of Occupancy. There will be a Meet and Greet on November 5, time to be determined. Presently, leases for the new location are about to be signed, and the space will have its first day of operation on November 6. STRIDES is close to hiring its first Job Coach. Students will have a choice of 15 work sites to go to, each has a job description, and students will complete an application, including why they would like the job. The Newtown teacher has relationships with these job sites. These are non-paying jobs. Newtown vans will provide the transportation to and from the job sites.

C. Nursing Program Update - Maria Kennedy provided a school nurse program update. Each school has a registered nurse in its building, except Consolidated which presently has two nurses. There is also a nurse "floater" and a nurse who is assigned to one student per a PPT. There is a wish to restructure the program. Instead of the current arrangement where one of the nurses acts as a lead nurse and is paid a stipend for this extra work, the Administration would like to hire a full-time lead nurse who would oversee the nurses and work over the summer when the four-week ESY (Extended School Year) program runs. Maria said the restructuring is needed because we also have more sick children now. The lead nurse, in addition to her administrative duties, would also substitute when a nurse is out sick. Maria said that Carrie DePuy is trying to make this new hire "cost neutral". It is not in the current budget. As part of this new hire, the Administration would look to centralize the nursing office location in the New Fairfield Elementary School. Over 100 students participated in the ESY program this summer.

D. Hiring - New hires include a new SPED teacher in the 4th grade area and there is an unfilled opening for another position with teachers helping to cover until it is filled; a new psychologist in the middle school and two new teachers; and one new teacher in the high school. All the schools need more paraprofessionals and there are positions open.

E. Unanticipated Costs - We have had more bilingual evaluations and there is a psych position open for which it would be ideal to hire a candidate with a bilingual background

(Spanish) due to the growing Hispanic population in the community. Due to changing demographics, we are requiring additional support but looking to create efficiencies by re-deploying employees.

F. Special Education Events - Other updates include: there will be an ELC night for families and local day care providers about how this program works (50% special needs students and 50% typical students who are selected by lottery); a Transition night in March for families of students who will transition from one school to another in our district; an Ice Cream Social in May, a fun activity for families.

G. Paraeducator Professional Learning - A \$5000 grant has been received from the State that has been put to use training our paraprofessionals in managing student behavior, an area they expressed great interest in.

IV. ACTION ITEMS - none

V. OTHER - none

Motion to adjourn: Made by: Ed Sbordone

Recording of vote: All in favor

Seconded by: Kim LaTourette

Meeting adjourned at: 6:45 p.m.